

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 PM-03 DODE-00 EUR-10 NEA-06 PRS-01

OPR-01 SY-02 USIA-04 L-02 SSO-00 RSR-01 /070 W

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P QVQQQPTZ JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0332

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

USINT CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY

CINCEUR PRIORITY

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR LY EG

SUBJ: TRIPOLI STATUS REPORT

REF: FBIS M201939H

1. JULY 20 TRIPOLI APPEARED NORMAL FOR A HOT FRIDAY, EXCEPT FOR DEMONSTRATIONS BY A GROUP OF ABOUT 1,000 EGYPTIANS IN FAVOR OF UNITY. THEY GATHERED AT EGYPTIAN RELATIONS OFFICE (EMBASSY) AND, NOT TO BE OUTDONE BY THE LIBYANS, PRESENTED CHARGE WITH PETITION WRITTEN IN BLOOD. AFTER CHARGE PREDICTABLY ASSURED THEM GOE ALL IN FAVOR OF UNITY, THE GROUP DISSIPATED TO BUY WATERMELONS. HOWEVER, THREE TO FOUR HUNDRED LATER MARCHED DOWNTOWN CHANTING "UNITY AND ABDUL NASSER" IN RESPONSE TO CHEERLEADERS.

2. EVENING JULY 20 I HAPPENED TO BE FELLOW GUEST OF EGYPTIAN CHARGE AT SMALL DINNER. AFTER WEVCCOG CALLED OUT TO RECEIVE PHONE CALLS, WE COMPARED NOTES. TWO

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POINTS OF INTEREST EMERGED: QADHAFI'S REPLY TO JULY 20 TO SADAT'S LATEST PLEA TO CONTROL THE MOTORCADE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A REQUEST THAT THE REPLY BE BROADCAST BY THE GOE (OR SO THE CHARGE SAID). SECONLDY, THE DATE OF QADHAFI'S RESIGNATION FROM THE RCC, GIVEN IN HIS REPLY AS BROADCAST BY CAIRO AS JULY 11, WAS ACTUALLY JUNE 11 IN THE ORIGINAL. (JUNE 11 WAS THE LAST OF TWO DAYS OF ANNOUNCED SUBSTANTIVE TALKS ON UNITY BETWEEN SADAT AND QADHAFI AT TRIPOLI, AS WELL AS THE DAY THEY EACH REVEALED BY SILENCE IN THEIR AMERICAN EVACUATION DAY SPEECHES THAT ALL WAS NOT GOING WELL RE UNITY.)

3. COMMENT: JUNE 11 MAKES MORE SENSE THAN JULY 11, AS THE NEXT SENTENCE IN QADHAFI'S REPLY WAS "I EMPHASIZED THIS (HIS RESIGNATION) TO YOU REPEATEDLY IN CAIRO AND ALEXANDRIA," ETC. QUESTIONED ABOUT THE REASON FOR QADHAFI'S RESIGNATION AS EARLY AS JUNE 11, EGYPTIAN CHARGE WAS OBSCURE, AND DENIED KNOWLEDGE OF IT AT THE TIME, BUT AGREED WITH ME THAT PERHAPS QADHAFI WAS NOW SAYING IN EFFECT "CONSIDER THAT I HAVE BEEN OUT OF THE PICUTURE SINCE JUNE 11, SO THAT ALL I HAVE DEMANDED OF YOU FOR THE PAST FIVE WEEKS CAN BE LAID ASIDE IF IT IS AN OBSTACLE TO UNITY." THIS IS OF COURSE AN AMBIGUOUS POSITION CONSIDERING THE CALVACADE TO EGYPT, AND COULD BE EQUALLY INTERPRETED "I AM KEEPING THE HEAT ON YOU UNTIL YOU MEET MY DEMANDS," PRESUMABLY FULL UNITY AND A SUITABLE POSITION FOR QADHAFI IN THE NEW GOVT.

4. EGYPTIAN CHARGE ALSO OBSERVED THAT IN ABSENCE OF QADHAFI NO ONE IN RCC ASSUMES THE CHAIR. HE MAINTAINED IT MADE NO DIFFERENCE WHETHER HE WAS ABSENT OR PRESENT: OTHER RCC MEMBERS ARE "ALL BEHIND HIM" (AN EXAGGERATION, BUT NO DOUBT ONE MEASURE OF THE EGYPTIAN DILEMMA, AS PERCEIVED, TO DATE BUT MAYBE NOT MUCH LONGER).

5. FURTHER COMMENT: IT STRIKES ME AS POSSIBLY SIGNIFICANT THAT THE GOE RUSHED QADHAFI'S JULY 20 REPLY INTO PRINT, WHETHER OR NOT HE ASKED FOR IT TO BE BROADCAST (SOMETHING NOT APPARENT IN THE TEXT, AS THE EGYPTIAN CHARGE WAS CLAIMING LAST NIGHT). THE GOE MAY HAVE THOUGHT IT MIGHT HELP CONTROL THE MOTORCADE, WHICH IS A CONFIDENTIAL

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DUBIOUS POSSIBILITY, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE CHARACTERISTIC, I SHOULD THINK, TO SUPPRESS THE PUBLICATION OF HIS RESIGNATION IN THE INTEREST OF EVENTUALLY ACHIEVING A RECONCILIATION WITH QADHAFI.

6. JULY 21 TRIPOLI IS ABNORMAL, WITH SHOPS CLOSED IN MANY AREAS AND DEMONSTRATIONS FORMING UP AND MARCHING OFF

DEMANDING THAT QADHAFI WITHDRAW HIS RESIGNATION (PER RCC REQUEST, AS CARRIED ON LOCAL MEDIA). THERE IS AS YET NO VISIBLE ANTI-FOREIGN ANGLE TO THIS CAMPAIGN, AND IN FACT ONE GROUP FORMED UP ALONGSIDE THIS EMBASSY AND MARCHED OFF TANGENTIALLY.

JOSIF

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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